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JANE MENDELSON

MS. MENDELSON: My name is Jane Mendelson.

1 [Before I speak my remarks, I can't resist saying with all due respect to you, ma'am, that I find it insulting
and embarrassing that the rest of your commission does not have the courage or respectfulness to sit up
2 there with you and to listen to the heartfelt and wise comments of local citizens who are paying heavily
with their time and energy to contribute to this process. The first part of my remarks dealt with accidents
and I'm going to skip it because many other people have spoken about that already, but I would like to
start by repeating one statement that I think is extremely important, even though it's been said.

It is estimated that a mixture of approximately 6,000 train and truck shipments would pass through the St. Louis area over the 30 years shipping campaign, or on average one every other day, thus creating the potential for innumerable accidents and terrorist attacks. Terrorists would love to steal our plutonium to manufacture their own bombs or they might just want to demand millions of dollars or other terrorists' release from jail in exchange for not blowing up a high-level radioactive waste transport. With such frequency of shipment, it couldn't be too hard for terrorists to figure out where and when these materials are on route.

If a bomb landed on one of these vehicles or a suicide bomber decided to ram one, we're talking about life-threatening pollution, not just to the surrounding area, but to the entire city. In the DOE's Draft Summary Environmental Impact Statement in a chart of estimated national transportation impacts for 24 years of operation, latent cancer fatalities from maximum reasonably foreseeable accidents are five for mostly truck scenarios and 31 for mostly rail scenarios. These estimates could not possibly have included potential terrorist attacks. Apparently there is some concern about such attacks, as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will require two armed escorts for every shipment of irradiated fuel rods. Such guards might have been able to save the stagecoaches of days past, but I have little hope that they could overpower modern terrorists.

While I am deeply disturbed about the danger to citizens from these transportation risks, the situation at the Yucca Mountain site itself could be described as a terrorist's dream. If the plan is approved, shipments could begin as early as 2004, but they'll have no safe place to go. Supposedly nuclear wastes can begin to be loaded into the new facility when it is 10 percent completed, but until that time they will be huddled together like a flock of sitting ducks on a parking lot, a perfect target even for an air attack.

While our Department of Energy may not fully acknowledge the peril in transporting high-level nuclear wastes, we don't have to look far to find others around the world who do. Last Saturday's New York Times reported the following: "Bowling to renewed concerns about terrorist attacks, Panama authorities said today that they were beefing up security to protect a British ship carrying radioactive cargo through the Panama Canal this weekend. 'The vessel is a visible target for any group that wants to make a statement,' Jorge Quijano, director of maritime operations for the Panama Canal Authority, said in an interview today. Environmental groups fear that the ship carrying high-level waste to Japan from France is vulnerable to terrorists who could board and dislodge or rupture the casks with the waste, threatening a potentially catastrophic release of radioactivity." Paul Leventhal, a representative from the Nuclear Control Institute in Washington commented, "The consequence of a release of radioactive waste would be long-lived. It would be very hard to clean up, and it could render the canal inoperable and the surrounding areas uninhabitable."

The very thought of submitting countless numbers of our citizens to the possible disasters herein described is incomprehensible. [